

AN AUTOPSY ON ATHEISM

By

Stanley E. Sayers

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DEDICATION

To Owen D. Olbricht, brother in Christ and dearest of friends. Co-laborers in the gospel since the Fall of 1951 when we first met at Harding College. A tall tribute to his undying zeal for our Lord, masterful direction of singing, inspirational man of the pulpit and one meeting with storming success in Northeast Workers Campaigns for Christ.

THE PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

We are living in an unbelieving world. That is bad enough, but the sad part is that atheism is growing. It is feeding on materialism, indifference, and complacency. While believers in Christ are enjoying the good life, our children are being taught evolution in the class room, millions of babies are being aborted each year, the church is confronted with liberalism from within – and then we wonder why more and more people are losing their faith. The majority are so uninformed of what is going on, they are not even alarmed.

To the unbeliever, this world is all there is, and with the increasing number of unbelievers, is it any wonder that the world seems to be going from bad to worse? When men are convinced that there is no life beyond the grave – and therefore, no one to answer to – they may feel free to do as they please regardless of who would be hurt. But what kind of life is that? In the final analysis, what can the world offer that would make it worthwhile even to have lived? Surely there must be more, and there is.

Brother Stanley E. Sayers, author of several well known books, has taken the time to dissect atheism, to cut to the core of it, to examine it, and to look at its claims and inconsistencies. The resulting picture is not pretty. In itself, it presents a most convincing case for the existence of God.

We want to thank brother Sayers for taking a stand for God and for putting down the teachings of atheism. With this reaffirmation, we are encouraged and strengthened to press the battle while there is still opportunity to do so. Let us forever remember that without God, we have

The Publisher's Statement

nothing, but with God we have everything worth having in the world, and the expectation of eternal life in the world to come.

J. C. Choate
Winona, Mississippi
September 1, 1989

INTRODUCTION

Scarce are the authors who elect to write their own Introduction, perhaps, but such is the case herein. Reasons being chiefly to satisfy the reader with the proposition and nature of the contents of the book, as well as its aims. The author has produced a former volume somewhat similar, *Optimism In An Age of Peril* (Gospel Light Publishing Co.), in which he has gathered at random articles from previous issues carrying his column, "In Defense of the Faith," in *Voice of Freedom*, edited by the esteemed P. D. Wilmeth of Dallas where the paper is published and widely distributed.

Each of the articles chosen for chapters in this immediate book seeks to say something about the modern harassment of atheism confronting not only those who possess little faith in God and His Word, but those with considerable grounding in both. If there is anything which ought to concern an American or any free man at all, it is that atheism is the official religion of the threatening Soviet Union who seek world control both by lie, deceit, and aggression. So many things could have been said in this rather small volume which were not, but we feel we have said a fair sampling. *Humanism* I and II we have left for a future volume, Lord willing, but their manifestos are terrifying!

The chapters of this book seek to say something about faith and nonfaith in God and the Scriptures of God. What a man believes or fails to believe can be astronomical! We trust in faith we have been fair with our thesis. No endeavor is made to bombard the unbeliever, but rather to look at what he actually does and must believe in order to

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be consistent with his unbelief. Chapters I through IV zero in on reasons for not being among the unbelieving. A chapter or two say more, and then we seek to hold forth the cardinal foundations of the Christian religion – reasons for believing the Bible and for believing in the resurrection of Christ. After we have done this, we close the book.

A prayer is earnestly offered that what is said herein might make one more aware of God and what he is without God, and what he can be with God! How awesome is the magnitude of faith in the Bible, and how alive Christ can become in the life of him who believing the evidence, seeks out the risen Lord.

– Stanley E. Sayers
August 25, 1989

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CHAPTER I

WHY I AM NOT AN ATHEIST (1)

“What is atheism like when its essential nature is laid bare? What does it have to say for itself? What attitude toward life does it furnish its adherents? What faith, hope and love does it give to mankind? What are the logical fruits of atheism? These are questions which anyone needs to consider if he is considering whether or not he will believe, or will continue to believe, in God or in atheism” (James D. Bales, “Introduction,” *Atheism's Faith and Fruits*, Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1951, p. 7). Many are the reasons for one's believing in God, the God of the Bible and of the Christian, the Creator of this vast universe. Atheism is negative in its approach to faith in God and the Scriptures. It has little or nothing to offer in their place, but finds much to attack and deny. Atheism must answer for what in nature can be seen of God (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1: 18-20). Unbelief must account for what the Bible says about God. For the acts of providence and the things which are singing within the soul of the believer. For many reasons I cannot believe in atheism nor be an atheist, and here are some of the reasons why:

THE CONFESSION OF UNBELIEF

Will Rogers said, “I never met a man I didn't like.”

Atheism boasts, "I have never seen a scripture I could not deny nor explain away to my own satisfaction." The unbeliever, the atheist, like it or not, admit it or not, confesses his own peculiar faith. He believes that God does not exist. He **believes this**. He believes that organic evolution can explain the universe and the populated earth. He believes that the entire cosmos arose through billions of years to what we see of it today merely as the product of an accident. He **believes this**. Frank Ballard said in his book, *The Miracles of Unbelief*, that there are far more staggering things involved in unbelief than there are in simple faith in God and the Scriptures. The unbeliever must believe that the universe is irrational. He must believe that something came from nothing. He must believe that man is the product of far-flung chance. He must believe in spontaneous generation. He must believe, "when consistent, that there are no moral values or ideals" (Bales, *Ibid.*, p. 10). He believes that we may rule out reason and explain the universe as we see it and know of it today. These are a mere sampling of things which atheism believes and is forced to believe when it professes negation of faith in God.

THE UNBELIEVER STRUGGLES WITH HIS CREED

"The idea of God is an idea that the atheist has a hard time getting away from. The reader may have heard of the country mouse who visited his atheistic cousin in the city. The learned city mouse brought forth his scholarly objections to the existence of God. The unlearned country mouse could not meet all the arguments but he kept

insisting that there must be some sort of 'something' behind it all. An atheistic friend told the author that many young people with whom he has come into contact, who professed to be atheists, continue to feel that there must be 'some sort of something' behind the universe and man. Perhaps they are inconsistent atheists like the man who exclaimed, 'I am an atheist, **thank God**'." (Bales, "The Beliefs of Atheism," *Ibid.*, p. 28).

Faith in God is hard to stamp out. Always looming in the back of the mind of the unbeliever is that possibility that somewhere he may be **wrong**. Clark Braden wrote, "Investigation, research, and thought have led every thoughtful mind to the axiom, that all human inquiry finally brings us face to face with ultimate truths, truths that can be resolved into no simple elements, and for which we can give no further reason than that they exist. On these ultimate truths rest all reasoning, demonstration and inference. As we pass out from them in our explorations, we always end in the mysterious, the unknown, the infinite. All around the finite area of the known, lies the infinite unknown. The circumscribed circle of human knowledge has all around it an infinite circumscribed area of the mysterious and unknown that lies beyond his horizon and limits his view on all sides, so does man, in all his investigations in every field of thought, find that his explorations end in the unknown, and that inseparably connected with what he claims to know is an infinite borderland of the unknown" ("The Theistic Solution," *The Problem of Problems*, Hollywood, California: Old Paths Book Club, 1949, p. 189).

A man, as oft argued as it is, would have to be God to know there is no God. He, like God, would have to be omnipresent to search out the universe to be certain there was no evidence of God. He would have to be omniscient, all knowing, or the one thing which he might not know is there is profound evidence of God. He, like God, would have to be omnipotent, all powerful, possessed of divine power in order to enforce his omnipresence and omniscient capacities. By trying through every endeavor to disprove the existence of God he becomes God, the kind of God he seeks to prove does not exist. It is utterly impossible to disprove the existence of God.

I BELIEVE THE BIBLE

One of the paramount reasons why I am not an atheist is because the Bible, the Book claiming to be the Book of God, is replete with evidences of its Author. All scripture is inspired of God (II Timothy 3:16). The apostle Peter, by the Spirit, said, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount. And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the

day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1: 16-21).

Long ago Jehovah said, "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them" (Isaiah 42:9). Over a period of sixteen hundred years, forty different writers from Moses until the curtain falls in the final act of Revelation, through John the beloved, compose a book rightly called The Book of Books. Its authors, many of them, knew nothing of the writing of other scribes. John knew much of Moses, and yet Moses in his day knew nothing of John. Through faith, those grand patriarchs of the Old Testament foretold things which should come to pass hundreds of years later and were historically correct. Only God himself could have so inspired such a volume! "Not only is it true that the Bible ~~was~~ inspired; but it still is inspired, for the Holy Spirit has maintained His vital union with Scripture. When we read: 'Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters . . . and he that hath no money' (Isaiah 55:1) or 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28), it is still the Holy Spirit who murmurs the words to our waiting hearts. He makes of the sacred text a living Word. His breath can be felt in it as in no other book. Thanks to Him, these written things are become spirit and life; man lives by them; they are words which even now issue from His mouth.

“Whoever has had experience with it cannot doubt of the supernatural origin of the Bible, for according to his capacity he receives it straight from God Himself, as did David, Isaiah, Paul and John. It is for him a word from God. He knows that when he obeys its instructions, he is obeying his heavenly Father. Counting on the promises of Scripture, he knows with certainty that it is in the Lord his God, his Redeemer, that he is placing his confidence” (Rene’ Pache, “Illumination,” *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, Chicago: The Moody Press, 1969, pp. 202, 203).

Commenting on the nature and strength of the Scriptures, Warfield has written, “Though spoken through the instrumentality of men, it is, by virtue of the fact that these men spoke as borne by the Holy Spirit, an immediately Divine word. It will be observed that the proximate stress is laid here, not in the scriptural value of Scripture (though that, too, is seen in the background), but on the Divine trustworthiness of Scripture” (Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, “The Biblical Idea of Inspiration,” *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1967, p. 137).

I BELIEVE IN THE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE

“The invisible things of him . . . are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made” (Romans 1:20). “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork” (Psalm 19:1). “When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and

the stars which thou hast ordained; What is man that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:3-4). We can survey the wondrous universe even as David did in the long ago. In fact, man has the facilities that enable him to know far more about the universe than could be known by man in the time of David. And each new discovery lends weight to the idea of the existence of God.

"One thing that must impress us is the immensity of the universe. This earth upon which we live is a tremendously big something. But it is a mere speck when compared with the sun which is a million times bigger. If the sun were cut into a million pieces each would surpass the earth in size. And this earth receives only the two billion-eth part of the light and heat of the sun.

"The distance around the earth, in round numbers, is twenty-five thousand miles. But the distance to the sun is four thousand times as great as the distance around the earth, being something over ninety-two million miles. Neptune is said to be two and one half billion miles away or thirty times as far away as the sun. Sirius, the brightest star of the heavens, is fifty-one million million miles away. The third brightest star in the sky, Alpha Centauri, is said to be twenty million million miles away or two hundred thousand times as far away as the sun. The distance to many of the heavenly bodies is so great that it is measured in terms of 'light years.' Some of them are said to be thousands of light years from the earth. This means that thousands of years are required for light, traveling at the rate of one hundred eighty-six thousand miles per second, to reach us from those bodies. Our solar system, composed

of sun, planets, and satellites is not the only solar system, according to the astronomers. They tell us that there are millions of others, each with its sun and planets Yes, the immense universe shouts aloud that God is. God's existence, power, wisdom, and goodness are being constantly sounded by the heavenly heralds. Their testimony is not a mere hint. It is a declaration. If you would see divine sublimity, gaze upward into the starry vault. If you would see infinity, wisdom, and divine fidelity, consider the balancing of the stars and mark the regularity of the planetary motions. They not only declare glory, but the glory of the Lord! They deliver to us unanswerable arguments for an intelligent conscious, controlling, and presiding Creator. Their testimony is proclaimed in all languages and they are witnesses that cannot be slain or silenced.

"Something is. Something cannot come from nothing. Therefore, something has always been. I call it God" (Raymond C. Kelcy, *Why I Believe in God and Other Sermons*, 1951, pp. 12, 13, 14).

CHAPTER II

WHY I AM NOT AN ATHEIST (2)

Having discussed some reasons as to why this author is no atheist, we now advance to others:

ABOUNDING EVIDENCE OF INTELLIGENT PLANNING

This world in which we live is not an open, barren sea of nothingness; but far to the contrary, in every direction we turn, we are arrested by the splendor of it all! Isaiah declared, "For thus saith Jehovah that created the heavens, the God that formed the earth and made it, that established it and created it not a waste, that formed it to be inhabited" (Isaiah 45:18). The vast multiplicity and grand order of things have much to say, for there is abounding evidence **which demands a verdict**. "From the very outset, the heavens presented men with a clear contrast and a crucial problem. The unrelenting sweep of the constellations led them to believe in a natural order binding all things together in a **harmonious system**" (Stephen Toulmin and June Goodfield, "Introduction," *The Architecture of Matter*, New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962, p. 18; bold mine, SES).

Our planetary system is so designed that all planets depend upon one another for their position with one

another and with the sun. Should one planet move out of its place, there would be a heavenly holocaust. Should one planet move closer to the sun, the others would be taken along with it and all life on earth would immediately perish. If our planetary system for some reason should regress from the sun, life on earth, to say the least, would freeze to death. There are so many things vested in the universal system in which we live, that to make demands of it, which God did not intend, could turn out to be our own sudden fate. It is ever to teach us that "whatsoever God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Jehovah God "established it and created it not a waste . . . formed it to be inhabited" (Isaiah 45:18). We are not asserting that man can destroy this universe; but rather that man is capable of advancing so far that God through the laws of nature (firmly affixed) will of a sudden make him very humble and lowly! And there are so many things expedient for life to exist on earth, that to attempt to explain them apart from divine special creation would be equal to the *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* resulting from an explosion in a printing factory! **Our universe is no accident.** And the teeming millions of forms of life, great and minute, living upon earth which could come from nothing short of miraculous intervention and supernatural creation.

"The adjustments of the earth for life are far too numerous to be accounted for by chance. First, the earth is a sphere freely poised in space ('He hangeth the earth upon nothing' - Job 26:7), in daily rotation on its polar axis, giving the alternation of day and night, and in yearly

revolution around the sun. These motions give stability to its orientation in space, and, coupled with the inclination (23 degrees) of the polar axis to the plane of its revolution (the ecliptic), affords regularity to the seasons, thus doubling the habitable area of the north and providing a greater diversity of plant life than a stationary globe could sustain.

"Secondly, the atmosphere of life supporting gases is sufficiently high (about 500 miles) and dense to blanket the earth against the deadly impact of twenty million meteors that daily enter it at speeds of about thirty miles per second. Among many other functions the atmosphere also maintains the temperature within safe limits, for life; and carries the vital supply of fresh water-vapor far inland from the oceans to irrigate the earth without which it would become a lifeless desert. Thus the oceans, with the atmosphere, are the balance-wheel of Nature" (Frank Allen, "The Origin of the World - By Chance or Design?", Editor, John Clover Monsma, *The Evidence of God in An Expanding Universe*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1958, pp. 20, 21).

One need but look about him to see the fingerprints of God. From the most lofty mountain to the smallest speck beneath the microscope, we are led to believe that this world in which we find ourselves is the handiwork of an Almighty Being whose wisdom far surpasses that of men. Ruler of Heaven and earth! From the most insignificant snowflake to the towering tops of the rainfall forest; from the tiniest blade of grass to the heaven's highest cloud; everywhere we look, everything without exception points to a Creator. And the child of God has learned from Jesus

to call Him Father. Well has Carl F. H. Henry stated, "The Christian revelation of God fully satisfies the minds of men; it is consistent with itself and all that we are and know. This great fact reinforces its validity at a time when speculative solution often leads mankind to the brink of anti-intellectualism and despair" ("The God Who Shows Himself," *The God Who Shows Himself*, Waco, Texas: Word Books, Inc., 1968, p. 2).

GOD IN SEARCH OF MAN

Within the heart of every human being there is a God-size zero! Many are the thousands who do not know this and this is one of the reasons that men fling themselves aimlessly about in life, for there is no true and complete satisfaction apart from God. And all the great religions of the world depict man in search of God, but Christianity alone depicts God in search of man. This may be seen in the thousands of wayward Israelites in the desert wandering which contained them now free from Pharaoh and Egyptian bondage. Ever were they unfaithful and divisive; ever did they want to keep their distance from their God who had freed them. When Moses was on top Sinai receiving the immortal ten commandments, Israel below was making and worshipping a golden calf!

The gold was not all that Israel brought with them out of Egypt, but its paganism, its idolatry, and its ways had become their ways. With freedom before them, they did not know what to do. They clamoured for a god they could see, a god who could go before, shouting, "These be

thy gods, O Israel, which delivered thee!" What blasphemy! What hideous indignation and outrage! God demanded Moses to stand back so His wrath might consume them. **They continually provoked the Lord to wrath** (Deuteronomy 9:7).

Consequently, the first and major commandment which God gave Israel was, **"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."** Then, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy upon thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:2-6).

And yet God loved Israel, and when they turned to Him, He always forgave them. He drew them to himself and declared His deep and abiding compassion and tender affection for them. The book of Isaiah is replete with the manifestations of the heart of God toward His people. The book of Hosea is filled with accounts of unfaithful Israel, how she had committed spiritual whoredom with the base of life, yet in all this He extended His arms to them; but they would not repent. "For the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord" (Hosea 1:2).

Often an atheist will break down and confess his fears, and among these fears is the potential that God does exist! "In San Francisco a few years ago the author heard

Mr. Wells (H. G. Wells) say that he was an atheist and that 'God' was just a word. Wells had fame and fortune but what was his verdict – concerning life as viewed by an unbeliever? 'And here I am at sixty-five . . . still asking for peace . . . That dignified peace . . . is just a helpful dream . . . but essentially an impossible dream'." (*Experiment in Autobiography*, pp. 12, 706, 631, Bales, *op. cit.*, p. 73). In Bales' *Atheism's Faith and Fruits* documentation upon documentation is given in which the unbeliever is caught in his own web.

Professor Romane, in his book, *Thoughts on Religion*, once an atheist, confessed, "I know from experience the intellectual distractions of scientific research, philosophical speculation, and artistic pleasures; but am also well aware that even when all are taken together and well sweetened to taste, in respect of consequent reputation, means and social position, the whole concoction is but as high confectionary to a starving man. There is no finality to rest in, while disease and death are always standing in the background. I take it as unquestionably true that this whole negative side of the subject proves a vacuum in the soul of man which nothing can fill save faith in God" (*Ibid.*, pp. 83, 84).

Many are the ways of the Father seen in the Son. He said to His disciples, "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you. **Ye did not choose me, but I chose you**, and appointed you, that ye

should go and bear fruit" (John 15:14-16; bold mine, SES).

THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD

Deep within the heart of every man is a vast area known as **moral consciousness**. Every man has a conscience. This, however, does not mean that a man will always know what is right and what is wrong. To illustrate: the savage of the jungle feels within that he must placate the gods of the Congo and he throws his children to the crocodiles. Until he has done this; he has no peace. His conscience will give him no rest. For us to do the same would be **high treason against Heaven!** The things over which we would grieve, he would find peace and contentment. God made man with a conscience. He has a conscience which can be taught and trained. The moral code among men indicates even more convincingly that with God there is a great moral law. And that moral law indicates a moral governor, and ruler, to wit, **God himself!**

One of the proofs that the ten commandments were the handiwork of God is the fact that there are no traces of other cultures having influenced the Jew and God's laws. The ten commandments, thought difficult to keep to exact letter, were refreshing and swept within the human soul of mankind a law, or system of laws, which God alone could have given, and totally unlike the many heathen laws of the superstitious and unenlightened. When trembling Moses asked the Lord what he should say in the event Israel inquired as to His name, God replied, "**I AM THAT I AM:** and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of

Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:13, 14).

God is the center and substance of moral law. "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," decree a moral code as applicable today as it was when given thousands of years ago. Man abides by these laws to his everlasting benefit and when walking contrary to them, soon loses the tender conscience which the Almighty has placed within. Mankind without moral law would be like wandering stars, having no valid sense of direction and little feeling as to what is right and what is wrong. We now live under the law of the New Testament, or New Covenant, and look to Jesus for His commandments. He alone who had kept the old commandments to perfection and nailed them to the cross (Colossians 2:14). In consequence thereof, the apostle Paul writes, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

CHAPTER III

WHY I AM NOT AN ATHEIST (3)

Thus far things have been said as to reasons for not professing atheism, and believing it to be the standard and the fact of the "good life," to say the least. We offer no apologies for anything which has been said. We seek only to open eyes, especially the college and young adult being coaxed into atheism, evolution as a scientific fact, and many other such things, leaving the reader or the student in a state of deep depression and in some cases emotional and mental illness. Few young people have endeavored to commit suicide who still retained their original faith in God. And the greatest number of suicides are the teens in particular. We want them to know that there is a God in Heaven, a divine Creator; that the Bible is His Word of revelation to mankind; that due to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, there is ever so much for which to live! (John 10:10).

ATHEISM IS UNBELIEF

One might forever describe a pet, pointing out its various characteristics: it is brown; it is young; it loves children, etc., and never mention that it is a dog, a cat or whatever. Atheism is somewhat like this. Whatever

attributes might be relegated to it, it is foremost **unbelief**. Unbelief in God, unbelief in the Scriptures, in moral conduct, and life after death, to mention but a few of its sour negations.

Pointedly, James Reid has written, "Science is preparing a surprise for mankind! At least it will be a surprise for those who have doubts about the Bible and its God. It will also come as a surprise for those who are laboring under the misapprehension that science has undermined the Bible. In fact it may even shock some scientists, who may be startled to find that their newly uncovered fact, or accepted theory, provides still another link in the chain of evidence that is showing that the facts of the universe support the Bible's statements - including Creation" ("God Created!", *God, the Atom and the Universe*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1968, p. 19).

The remarkable Dr. Wilbur M. Smith, in his classic text on Evidences, wrote, "Unless some unexpected supernatural force enters our contemporary civilization compelling a change in the course, which it is now pursuing, no carefully drawn chart of the intellectual, religious and economic tendencies of the twentieth century will foretell anything else, for the years immediately before us, than that there will be even more frequent and increasing powerful attacks on the Christian faith. If the next fifty years should reveal in western civilization an apostasy from the Christian faith, and a weakening of its hold upon thinking people, as great as the past fifty have witnessed, true believers will then have become hardly more than a persecuted remnant, the church for the most part nothing more than

an institution devoted to the welfare of men, and a true knowledge of the Bible rarer than a knowledge of Greek myths. God grant that other forces than those arising from the darkened, self-centered, proud, God-hating hearts of men may soon begin to powerfully manifest themselves in the midst of our increasingly irreligious era, turning men, by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, from a way that leads to redemption, emancipation, and holiness of life, indeed to the throne of Grace, and the presence of God" ("The Forces and Agencies Engaged in the Modern Attack Upon Christianity," *Therefore, Stand!*, Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1951, pp. 101, 102).

This particular volume carries on its cover, "A Plea for a Vigorous Apologetic in This Critical Hour of the Christian Faith." Unbelief is unbelief and atheism still remains the God-defying machinery that is turning back the faith of our youth and even older, using whatever medium to "stamp out religion" – the hallmark of the Communist conspiracy. Anyone wanting some evidence of our assertion needs to turn on his TV, read his daily paper, listen to the news. One of the critical weapons of Communism is to inflate the economy. They are having little difficulty in doing so. They are right on target and other prime objectives are rapidly being achieved. (See the shocking, *Toward Soviet America* by Foster).

ATHEISM DENIES THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

Wilbur M. Smith, aforementioned, has authored the book titled, *The Supernaturalness of Christ: Can We Still*

Believe In It? In this he says, directing attention to our caption, "For nineteen hundred years the Christian Church has uninterruptedly declared that it was bearing testimony to supernatural truths, and that it rested on a historical foundation of supernatural events. These events, the Christian faith has always affirmed, center in and find their most remarkable manifestation in, the life and work of Jesus Christ, primarily in His miraculous birth. His transfiguration, His own miraculous deeds, and His resurrection. If these are ever given up, the supernaturalness of the Christian faith is simultaneously abandoned" ("Preface," Boston: W. A. Wilde, Co., 1954, pp. vii, viii).

"It cannot be denied that naturalism is winning to its support vast numbers of our younger generation, capturing first, multitudes of students in our colleges and universities, and then, through their influence, their teaching, their writing, their indifference to all religion, an even greater multitude of young people who have never had the privilege of university training. However, we dare to suggest that naturalism has been accepted by so many in our day, not because the foundations of the Christian faith have been destroyed, but because those who are determined not to believe in God, or in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, are continually insisting, without an examination of the evidence, that the foundations have been destroyed!" (*Idem.*).

Down through the ages men have called into question the divinity of Jesus the Christ. They have questioned, scorned His heavenly authority, and like "doubting Thomas," refused to believe without further proof. But the

Scriptures have provided abundant evidence! To us today, as with Thomas almost two thousand years ago, Jesus says, "Be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:25-29). And why do we have such evidence? John tells us, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (vss. 30, 31).

Fully aware of His divine nature, Jesus declared, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me" (John 8:42). He said to His disciples, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Jesus' divinity was declared at His baptism in Jordan (Matthew 3:16, 17); and His transfiguration on the mount with Moses and Elijah (Matthew 17:9). Further, John wrote, **"He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name"** (John 1:10-12). And yet atheism denies all this. **It does not even believe in the God who sent Christ into the world!**

With such care did the beloved disciple write, "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life. (And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life,

which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:1-3). **If this is not firsthand witness and testimony there is no such thing!**

The skeptic H. G. Wells when asked how he viewed the writers of the gospels, replied, "I must honor them as historians. They were there; I was not." Wells further conceded concerning Jesus, though not admitting to His miraculous works, **"Here was a man."** No rational mind will deny that Jesus is locked in with time and history. Jesus specifically chose His twelve apostles because they would be with Him, know His distinct personality, and all that accompanied the life and the ways of the immortal man of Galilee. They alone were choice witnesses; they alone could identify Him after His divine and supernatural bodily resurrection from the tomb. As Peter worded it at the house of Cornelius, **"Him (Christ) God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead"** (Acts 10:40, 41).

ATHEISM DENIES THE VIRGIN BIRTH

By God's Spirit, Isaiah reached forward into time, **"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel"** (7:14). The entire ministry of Jesus either

stands or falls at this one verse. Modernism does away with the sacred sign, saying, "Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son" (*Idem.*, *Revised Standard Version*). Both *King James* and the *American Standard Version* translate it "virgin," and such it was. The sign was the conception by a virgin. It is scientifically and biologically impossible for a woman to conceive without a man. But the sign which God gave Israel and eventually the entire world was the fact that in her conception she bore a son, but experienced no relationship with man. **The virgin birth was itself the sign God gave!** And modernism and liberalism frankly deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

"How, except by the virgin birth, could our Saviour have lived a complete human life from the mother's womb, and yet have been from the very beginning no product of what had gone before, but a supernatural Person come into the world from outside to redeem the sinful race? . . . Deny or give up the story of the virgin birth, and inevitably you are led to evade the high Biblical doctrine of sin or else the full Biblical presentation of the supernatural Person of our Lord. A noble man in whom the divine life merely pulsed in greater power than in other men would have been born by voluntary generation from a human pair; the eternal Son of God, came by a voluntary act to redeem us from the guilt and power of sin, was conceived in the virgin's womb by the Holy Ghost" (J. Gresham Machen, "Conclusion and Consequences," *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, p. 395).

Jesus was both God and man. He was the God-Man! Miraculously conceived by the power of God and declared

unto the world as its Lover and its Saviour. He could walk on water; calm storms with a rebuke; multiply a few loaves and fishes so as to feed thousands – which event in so doing produced thousands of eyewitnesses! Turn water into the choicest wine; heal the sick regardless of the affliction or the time of its duration; cleanse the detested leper; drive maniac demons out of the poor wretched personality invaded by them at will; give sight to the blind; restore hearing to the deaf; enliven the mouth which could speak no words; raise the dead; and on go the miracles which in themselves bear avid and undeniable testimony to His Sonship with the Father. **If this is not the Jesus who lived and who had firsthand historians and witnesses by the thousands -- what Jesus did live?**

And even at this, it was not until His crucifixion and miraculous resurrection that some did believe! John declared, **“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written”** (21:24, 25).

CHAPTER IV

WHY I AM NOT AN ATHEIST (4)

Many are the reasons for not being an atheist and to the far contrary being a believer in both God and the Bible and we have detailed a number. But the most striking evidence is the fact that **Jesus is coming again!** The most demanding proof that Christ will come again is the fact that He was once here and while here promised to return. He told chosen witnesses that He would come again (John 14: 1-3; Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). It was this promised return which kindled the fires of evangelism throughout the church and throughout the world. If those early and eager Christians believed anything at all it was the second coming of Christ.

HE IS COMING AGAIN

Jesus was **supernatural**, and to this supernatural life which included His glorious resurrection was appended the promise of His return. "If Christ did not indeed manifest supernatural power, if His entrance into the world of humanity was by a miraculous birth, if He truly rose from the dead in His own body, what conclusions are we naturally led to? There are four: that there never has been any other person in all of human history to compare with the

Lord Jesus, if we consider His birth, His life, His works, His resurrection; that what such a One said must be divinely true; that what such a One undertook to do for us, to save us from our sins by His holy death, must have been something mankind supremely needed to have done; that the full approval of God the Father was upon His entire ministry. If God approved of Christ, and all that He did, will we disapprove?

“God does not want us to blindly believe. He purposely inspired, through the Holy Spirit, certain men to write down the truth concerning Christ so that we might intelligently, and with full assurance, believe. ‘This is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day’,” (John 20:31; 6:40). (Wilbur M. Smith, “Epilogue,” *The Supernaturalness of Christ*, Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1954, p. 230). Jesus was here and He shall return!

WE MUST BE READY

In the author's volume, *The Nature of Things to Come*, considerable documenting is made at the beginning of fanaticism which has soured men on His return. But there have been these ever since Christ went back to the Father. Our readiness for His return pulsates throughout the Scriptures of God. There will be no second chance. Purgatory is not a Biblical doctrine. Thus it is with a stroke of finality that in the *Unveiling* it is said, “He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is

holy, let him be made holy still" (Revelation 22:11). "The time of fulfillment will come so suddenly that there will be but little space for repentance and amendment. What is done must be done instantly; and let him that is holy persevere, and hold fast what he has received" (Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, Volume 6, *Romans -- Revelation*, p. 1063).

Jesus' return shall come as a snare upon the whole earth when men least expect it (Luke 21:25; I Thessalonians 5:1-3). It shall come as lightning out of the east that shines even to the west (Matthew 24:27). Sending out alarms will be fruitless. Hence, Jesus warns, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here; believe it not" (Matthew 24:23). Paul writes, "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Corinthians 15: 51, 52).

The parable of the ten virgins, five wise, five foolish, is built about the return of Jesus at the end of the world (Matthew 25:1-13). Readiness is the chief reason and what we are to glean but seeks further to prepare ourselves for His return.

JESUS WILL NOT RETURN TO EARTH

That Christ shall not set foot on earth again is clearly taught in the Scriptures, Paul writes, "But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall

asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, **shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.** Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). The Redeemer was to stand on the earth in the last days (Job 19:25); but the last days began with Christ's coming to earth through the miraculous virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:17-25; 2:1ff). Hence, we are not to anticipate Christ's coming back to earth, for He has already come to earth and His arrival on earth was the beginning of the last days. We are now living in the last days – they are not before us – they are **upon** us. Their entrance began with Jesus Christ coming to earth and will end with His return in the clouds and great glory.

"Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things

unto him, that God may be all in all" (I Corinthians 15:24-26, 28). "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). The *King James* words it, "in these last days" (*Idem.*).

BEWARE OF ALARMISTS!

Down through the centuries men have declared the immediacy of Jesus' return. And yet He himself said, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders . . . Behold, I have told you before hand" (Matthew 24:23, 24, 25). There were alarmists in the days of the apostles and Paul writes the church at Thessalonica, "Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand" (II Thessalonians 2:1, 2). And while on earth Jesus taught, "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only" (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32).

Alarmists have caused many to disbelieve the Bible doctrine of the final hour by their wreckless, impulsive dispositions. According to God through Jeremiah, they are the "prophets of the deceit of their own hearts!" Jesus did

not know, the angels did not know, none but God knew that day and that final moment. How much less some carnal mind seeking attention or being led along in a senseless derision (II Thessalonians 2:9-12).

NOAH AND FAMILY

“And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man” (Matthew 24:37-39).

The apostle to the Gentiles writes, “By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith” (Hebrews 11:7). Just as we have scoffers today, and unbelievers, surely Noah had many more. Only Heaven could have given the proper precision to that massive boat called the ark. And Noah was willing to be God’s “fool.” His faith and his obedience saved himself, his family, “and a sampling of all that had life upon the earth.”

THE APOSTOLIC WITNESS

Scoffers should come defaming the doctrine of the second coming of Christ and the consequent end of time

(II Peter 3:3, 4). Their ignorance was deliberate (vs. 5). They are like those who did not want God in their remembrance (Romans 1:28). But because Christ has not yet come does not mean that He will never come. When we endeavor to bind God to our time schedule, we are in trouble! By the Holy Spirit, Peter wrote, "This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles; knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God: by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men" (II Peter 3:1-7).

And why has the world not yet come to an end? The Word of God declares, "But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness: but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (vss. 8, 9).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (vss. 10-13).

JUDGMENT DAY AND ETERNITY

At that grand and glorious day, we shall all appear before the throne and judgment seat of Christ (Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 14:10-12; II Corinthians 5:10, 11; Revelation 20:11-15). On earth He hung on a cross; in Heaven He will sit on a throne! The resurrection morning will be announced by the sound of a trumpet, the shout of the Lord, the voice of the archangel, and the power of Almighty God. The dead in Christ shall be first raised (I Thessalonians 4:16). The righteous then living will be caught up in the air (vs. 17). Everything will transpire “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” (I Corinthians 15: 52). The righteous shall enter the Portals of Glory and the unrighteous shall be cast into everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:12-15). The godly shall dwell with the Ancient of Days and shall at long last look

upon His holy face (Revelation 22:14). All sickness, all sorrow, all pain and grief, indeed death itself, shall forever and ever be done away (Revelation 21:4). **Eternity will have begun!** May our unbelieving and scoffing audience be reminded that if we establish **just one miracle**, we establish it all. And the Bible is filled with, pulsates with, **the miraculous from cover to cover.**

I am not an atheist and cannot be – for the Scriptures of God have cast all doubt out of my heart. And looking to that one great and final miracle, we say, **“Come, Lord Jesus!”** (Revelation 22:20).

CHAPTER V

WHAT HAVE THEY TO GIVE?

The major portion of the attack of atheism or whatever form of unbelief through the centuries has always been that of something negative, never or at the most seldom positive. For instance, when unbelievers seek to remove divine and special Creation, they produce assumptuous, unproven evolution which does not identify with the facts of reality nor possess a single scientific leg on which to stand. When they take away the blood atonement and the religion of Jesus Christ, they have only false fronts or something akin to "Jesus Christ Superstar," near blasphemy, if not altogether. The purpose being to create a new Jesus, a now image of the real Jesus for our youth, thus further aiding the advancement of Godless, Christless Communism.

A TOTAL NEGATION

When it comes to moral conduct, we receive situation ethics or pure barnyard morality. And every man becomes his own judge and his own god. When they remove prayer, they may substitute psychotherapy, but totally disregard observations as such men as Dr. Clyde Narramore who stated that a return to mental health was quite impossible without a religious orientation. When it comes to the

concrete facts, atheism is a negation of an affirmative, replacing nothing, nothing positive or of true value to take the place of the Christian faith it seeks both to evade and hopefully destroy. Communism is **militant atheism**.

So until atheism can come up with a god truer than God himself, and a factual Jesus more real than the real Jesus, we shall with sound confidence continue reading our Bibles and praying our prayers. For once again, if man made God as some claim, just **who made man?** Boldly and blindly to contend that man simply evolved from a freak accident is to encounter a herculean obstacle course defying words! **The Biblical record stands firm.**

DARWIN REMAINED MUCH IN DOUBT

"In view of Darwin's admission, which was made after he had published the *Origin of Species*, is it not strange that many claim that his book proved the theory of organic evolution? **Even he did not believe that it did.** (Bold mine, SES). This, as we have previously remarked, is further testified by the hundreds of 'perhapses,' and other statements of uncertainty, that are in the book.

"The disciples of Darwin, however, do not seem to see how anyone could read his book fairly and not be convinced. And yet Darwin, in another letter to G. Bentham on June 19, 1863, said: 'I, for one, can conscientiously declare that I never feel surprised at the arguments advanced on this side. **I remember too well my endless oscillations of doubt and difficulty**.'" (Francis Darwin, Editor, *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, New York:

D. Appleton and Co., 1897, Vol. II, p. 210, as quoted in Clarke and Bales, *Why Scientists Accept Evolution*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966. Last bold mine for emphasis, SES). The author could not do better than refer the reader to Robert E. D. Clark, *Darwin: Before and After* (Chicago: The Moody Press).

THE DANCE OF THE MORONS

G. Campbell Morgan in his introduction to Nathan R. Wood's potent volume, *The Secret of the Universe* (Eerdmans), said a great deal: "We make no apology for speaking of God. **A universe without God is meaningless now.** (Bold mine, SES). For the day of the blind soul in a black universe has gone by. The stars and the atoms have taught us to see. The deepest instinct of one who lives in the modern universe reasons irresistably. 'The fool,' it may be, has always 'said in his heart, There is no God.' **But the modern universe leaves scant footing for such a dance of the morons. Even when the mind does not analyze, the heart reasons, and that is the deepest reasoning**" (Bold mine, SES).

THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING

Often the Christian is accused of leaping by blind faith or walking with nothing solid beneath his feet, but the Christian **does not believe without evidence and first hand experience!** He does not simply guess at things. And it is precisely this, to walk the walk of the Galilean, this challenge, which keeps right on causing one Christian to reach

out and make another.

“Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed on him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself” (John 7:16, 17). And the beloved John writes of the assurance contained within the hearts of those early saints, “And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (I John 3:20).

The promise of the Father and the Son to come and make their abode with the obedient believer has much to offer! (John 14:23).

UNBELIEF A CONDITION OF THE HEART

The unbeliever will remain glued to his unbelief until he becomes willing to let the Holy Spirit through the Word operate upon his unregenerate heart (Romans 10:17; James 1:21; I Peter 1:23). Then and only then may faith spring up in the place of skepticism and unbelief; and look in astonishment over those things previously rejected due to the blinding power of Satan, “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4), who, according to Jesus in His parable of the sower, “Cometh . . . and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved” (Luke 8:12).

Surely the most effective and convincing vivid visual aid to the truth of Christianity is the conversation of a Communist and an atheist, and we have both on record. How can ye believe, rebukes Jesus, when the central and

foremost ambition is to receive the praise of men and not of God? (John 5:44). Unbelief remains to this hour a condition of the heart, at whose door Jesus stands patiently knocking, seeking entrance (Revelation 3:20).

And when the unbeliever, at whatever station in life, does indeed break the substantial faith of "one of these little ones which believe in me (Jesus), it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6); for what has the avowed atheist to give in exchange for the faith he has earnestly sought to destroy?

CHAPTER VI

ARE MOST INTELLIGENT MEN ATHEISTS?

The blank statement that all or most men of intellectual stature and recognition are disbelievers in God and the Scriptures is without foundation. In fact, the very opposite is true. "The atheists tell us that the greatest Presidents in the U. S. A. have been disbelievers. This statement is not true. Most Presidents have had strong religious ties. Lincoln and Jefferson are just two examples of this. Lincoln would not identify himself with any of the churches where he lived, because (he said) 'they are not practicing the doctrine of Christ. They are not His true church.' Jefferson was far from an atheist. He believed in God. He said, 'An atheist I can never be.'" (From letter to John Adams, Lewis T. Oldham, "Are All Great Men Atheists?", *Is There Really A God?*, Murfreesboro, Tennessee: DeHoff Publications, MCMLXV, p. 30).

"The assertion that the atheists make that the most educated people are disbelievers is about as near the truth as their statement about the Presidents. For instance, they print out a list of 300 names whom they declare to be atheists. ONLY SIX of the list can be shown to be atheists. From the writings of the other 294 it is easily seen that they believe in a Supreme Being, one who rewards and punishes men. Can one imagine why a man would thus

slander the names of some of the greatest men, who believed in a divine being, many of whom were humble, devout Christians? The fact is that nearly all of the world's greatest thinkers are believers in God, though some may not have the true conception" (*Idem.*).

WHO ARE THE BELIEVERS?

We shall not hedge nor build a strawman. In John Clover Monsma's book, *The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe*, he gathers in the names of forty American scientists who declare their affirmative views on religion. In the chapter, "The Absoluteness of the Certainty of God's Existence," Andrew Conway Iva, Ph. D., M. D., D. Sc., LL. D., F. A. C. P., physiologist, declares, "Is there a God? Yes. I am as certain that there is a God as I am certain of anything. I am as certain that there is a God as I am that I am, or exist.

"Belief in the existence of God provides the only complete, ultimate and rational meaning to existence. Belief in God is the only ultimate reason for the absolute certainty that man is a person and something more than a parcel of matter and energy. Belief in God is the source and the ultimate basis of the most inspired conception of the human mind, namely that original, natural Brotherhood of Man based on the Fatherhood of God. Belief in God is the only ultimate and absolute source of our inalienable rights and duties, because we are truly equal only in the sight of Absolute or Perfect Love, Justice and Mercy. Belief in God yields a power which guarantees

that no absolute disaster can happen to the person who truly cherishes such belief. Belief in God is the only firm basis for faith in the permanency of spiritual values because such permanency resides only in the existence of an Eternal and Divine Personality" (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers, 1958, p. 225).

In this stimulating volume, it is not difficult to read statements made by such outstanding personages as Irvine William Knoblock, natural scientist, who said, "Religious faith is bolstered, fortified by scientific discoveries. Enough verification, by science, or Biblical statements has occurred to 'renew our strength' (Isaiah), and we may reasonably assume that more revelations will be substantiated. Astronomy points to a beginning in the far distant past and physics foretells an ultimate doom. From a standpoint of modern science it is unreasonable to assume that the universe always existed, or that it always will exist. Change is one of the primary characteristics of the universe, and in this regard science and religion agree.

"As stated above, science can never actually prove the existence of God, or explain Him. Yet the wonders of the universe have converted many neutral astronomers to the belief that someone unknown, and perhaps unknowable, has been responsible for the vastness and order so apparent . . . I believe in God. I believe in Him because I do not think that mere chance would account for the emergence of the first electrons or protons, or for the first atoms, or for the first amino acids, or for the first protoplasm, or for the first seed, or for the first brain. I believe in God because to me His Divine existence is the only

logical explanation for things as they are" (*Ibid.*, pp. 88, 89).

STAGGERING EVIDENCE

And who were and who are the believers? There was Sir Isaac Newton who discovered the law of gravitation and the law regulating the heavenly bodies. Joseph Priestly, clergyman, and Steele, the discoverers of oxygen. Michael Faraday, "a star of the first magnitude in the constellation of scientists"; Lord Kelvin, once President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, who said, "I believe that the more thoroughly science is studied the further does it take us away from anything comparable to atheism; and **'If you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to the belief in God,** which is the foundation of all religion. You will find it not antagonistic, but helpful to religion." (Bold mine for emphasis, SES).

Charles D. Walcott, geologist and President of the National Academy of Sciences, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and head of the Smithsonian Institute of Washington, D. C. Edwin Grant Conklin, zoologist, head of the Department of Zoology, Princeton University. James Rowland Angelo, psychologist and President of Yale University; Jonn Merle Coulter, botanist, head of the Department of Botany at the University of Chicago; Michael I. Pupin, physicist and engineer, Professor of Electro-mechanics and Director of Phoenix Research Laboratory, Columbia University; William James Mayo, surgeon, Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research; George David Berkoff, mathematician,

head of the Department of Mathematics, Harvard; Arthur A. Noyes, Chemist and Director of the Gates Chemical Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California. William Wallace Campbell, astronomer, Director of Lick Observatory and President-elect of the University of California; John J. Carthy, engineer, Vice President in Charge of Research, American Telephone and Telegraph Company, New York. Then, Robert A. Millikan, physicist, Director of Norman Bridge Laboratory of Physics, Pasadena, California; William Henry Welch, pathologist, Director of the School of Hygiene and Public Health, John Hopkins University. John G. Merriam, Paleontologist, President of the Carnegie Institute of Washington; Gano Dunn, engineer, Chairman of the National Research Council, Washington, D. C. (Oldam, "Are All Great Men Atheists?", *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 34, 35).

Howard Whitman, journalist, wrote a book titled, *A Reporter in Search of God*, in which he visited men of all walks and recorded in his findings a sterling source of reference. Dr. Jason John Nassau, astronomer in the Warner and Swasey Observatory of the Case Institute of Technology, said, "I think the essence of our faith is in the relationship of this human mind to the universe. Simply studying the universe alone does not bring you to a belief in God. The universe is physical. God is spiritual; but if you do believe in God, then the study of the universe, its bigness and its complexities is sure to make your belief richer and strengthen it" (Double Day and Company, p. 30).

Dr. Schilt of the astronomy department at Columbia

University said, "The hope and faith of the astronomers is that eventually we will find that it is so because it couldn't be otherwise. The greatest shock would be to find that it all just happened" (*Idem.*). After quoting numerous others, Whitman remarked, "... the elder scientists, I found, had the deepest spiritual awareness. Most of them had gone through the phase of agnosticism. They HAD MOVED ON." As one elderly geneticist remarked, "When we think we know a lot, we're agnostic. When we learn how insignificant our knowledge is, we return to God." While the young man, cocksure in his laboratory says, "How wonderful I am! Look what I've found in the atom!" The old man says, "Isn't God wonderful – look what He's put in the atom!" (*Ibid.*, p. 20).

THE MEANING OF THE EVIDENCE

Let it be said that multitudes of other believers in God and the Bible could have been called to the witness stand, but what is the meaning of the extensive evidence? It says that a universe without a Creator and a world without a God **does not and cannot exist!** Kenneth Hamilton, in his book, *God Is Dead: The Anatomy of a Slogan*, wrote, "It is hardly surprising that the death-of-God theology has made such a stir, for, considered as a slogan, 'God is dead' is magnificent. It is short, clear, and shocking even to the non-believer. (Nietzsche made the most of its shick value in his parable of the Madman bringing the news that man, achieving the impossible, has killed God and has the blood of the just as a good slogan should be. The combination

'death-of-God theology' intrigues because of the contradiction implied. We see it and decide at once that there cannot be such a theology, not really, not literally. What the people who use the combination must mean is that our way of thinking and speaking about God is inadequate, or that it is our souls that have died to faith and need to be revised and put in touch once more with the living God" (Chapter, "Catch a Slogan by the Tail," Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966, p. 11).

One of the significant irritations to faith in God is that there have been vast numbers of professing Christians who have been anything but convincing! Either to themselves or to the unbelieving world looking on. Jesus of Nazareth, divine Founder of the world, Son of the living God, embracing the Christian faith said of His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth . . . Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-16). And it is to the most intelligent mind that Christianity works, makes sense. It speaks with conviction and meaning. Yet a man must know it for himself. He cannot live off the faith of another. His own faith must rest in God. While we have mountains of objective evidence for our faith in God and the Scriptures of God, there is also that one particular element without which the church, God's kingdom, could not expand and grow. Thus we show the subjective evidence concerning which no man nor demon could remove from the breast of him who has become through evidence a profound believer. To quote scripture, "**He hath the witness in himself**" (I John 5:10). And prompted by the Founder of Christianity, he profitably learns that "**. . . ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**" (John 8:32).

CHAPTER VII

THE ATHEISM OF PROSPERITY

This may appear to the reader a sharp break in our link of thought, but we do wish herein to name a **unique type of atheism**. It neither denies nor implies. It stands alone.

If ever there lived a man who should have been keenly aware of who by the grace of God he had become, what he had and so bountifully possessed, it was King Solomon of Israel. So teeming was his multitudinous heritage that when the queen of Sheba came for "on-site-inspection," she beyond herself confessed, "The half hath not been told!"

And in the midst of so much, Israel's king uttered a timeless prayer of beckon and prevention, "Two things have I asked of thee; Deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lies; Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with food that is needful for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, **Who is Jehovah?**" (Proverbs 30:7-9).

This sorely needs to be our prayer today, and perhaps Americans in their luxury are all the more coming to realize it during a critical energy shortage that is more and more being referred to as a crisis!

GOD IS A GIVER

Just as it is God's nature to love (I John 4:8), equally is it that He gives because it is His nature to give; He is a Giver (James 1:17). If there is anything concerning day by day living that we need to learn from the brief sojourn of our Lord Jesus here on earth, it is that we should not live tomorrow today nor worry ourselves out of proportion concerning a scarcity of something we can in no measure supply. God made us and knows us and loves us. This seems the cynicism of many. If we have an origin at all, it is in the mind, the Spirit, the soul, the hand, the very heart of Almighty God! Nothing greater could be said for us. Unlike the rushing madness of humanity shoved on by blind forces of defiance crashing at the crossroads of heated conflict, God is the Author of peace and beckons us to partake of His utmost blessings. Verily, He spreads a table and bids us to His feast. He anointeth our heads with oil, our cup runneth over. **This is going on behind the scenes all the time -- we just aren't tuned in to it!**

He loves us in a way we shall never comprehend with these carnal, limited, human minds. Concerning His covenant people, Paul declared, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8: 31, 32). Ever are we challenged by David, father of fabulously wealthy Solomon, "Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good: Blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him" (Psalm 34:8).

LAND OF ABUNDANCE

America is known for its sumptuous plenty. Its wheat fields are a lake of gold, lovingly blessed by Heaven, stretched out in a blaze of rapturous glory and staggering "bumper crops." From the time that our New England forefathers set foot on this rich and fertile soil only indolence has failed to regularly spread a daily table for the American "Solomon." Our Thanksgiving Day, a time altogether unique both in the United States and Canada, has sought over the years to beckon us back to the time when, because of faith in God and raw-bone courage, a few weary pilgrims buried their frozen dead in hope, and praised the Lord of Heaven and earth for the corn the Indians taught them how to plant – which grew from poverty to astounding riches! But in the midst of so much, we may become anesthetized to frank reality. **We may fall a fatal victim of the Mesmerizing effect of nuggets of gold being brought us on a conveyor belt of pure silver.** And this is just precisely what Solomon was praying about. And so should we!

Let us not be deluding ourselves into thinking other world powers wouldn't relish taking our land from us! The Soviet Union has already drawn up a map of how things will look once they have overthrown us.

THE ATHEISM OF PROSPERITY

Well did Charles E. Jefferson reflect, "Gratitude is born in hearts that take time to count up past mercies."

And John Henry Jowett vividly observed, "Life without thankfulness is devoid of love and passion. Hope without thanksgiving is lacking in fine perception. Faith without thankfulness lacks strength and fortitude. Every virtue divorced from thankfulness is maimed and limps along the spiritual road."

The classical infidel, Robert G. Ingersoll, said, "By this time we should cease to expect aid from on high. By this time we should know that Heaven has no ear to hear, and no hand to help." Fortified by the opportunities of gross prosperity, men bitter at heart have sought feverishly to rid the universe of its Maker, and perhaps it was to some extent of this very kind that Solomon spoke, "Or lest I be poor, and steal, And use profanely the name of my God . . . There is a generation that curse their father, And bless not their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes. And yet are not washed from their filthiness" (Proverbs 30:9, 11-12).

GOD HELP US

In a Thanksgiving season just behind us, while across the nation kitchens faithfully burned the incense of turkey, dressing, sweet potatoes, pumpkin pie, to mingle with the cranberry pastries and pleasantries of far, far more – we would do well now to reflect again as to **why** we have **food, a kitchen and a house!** Let us never forget that over the world there are thousands of hungry and homeless orphans of war, with gnawing empty stomachs that would leap to eat the crumbs that descend from the average American

table, often groaning with weight of abundance, and "rootless" generations the victim of "ruthless" generations. Let us not forget that the threat of God-hating militant Communism is daily edging away our American heritage and carving with cunning, lies, deception, infiltration of communication media, and every other way, out of our substance a youthful generation who, if we neglect the God of our forefathers, will limp in slavery over a land that has become the greatest country in the world and remained great because the Lord has built the house and preserved those who live therein! Let us never forget who put us where we are, lest He withdraw His grace and consequently our fortress tumbles; ever let us proclaim, **"In God We Trust!"**

There are exceedingly trying days before us, our own materialism threatening to drown us; atheism on the rage, fanned on by Communism, Humanism becoming more daily a dragon breathing out fire, and Satan – yes, he's real – actively filling his godless veins with the blood-faith of fundamental, conservative and Biblical apostacies. Now is the time, to quote the rhetoric which taught us to write with keys, for all good men, not to abandon, but to come to the aid of their country!" And defend the strength of the moment by maintaining loyalty to our God-fearing past, knowing full well that: **"Except Jehovah build the house, They labour in vain that build it: Except Jehovah keep the city, The watchman waketh but in vain"** (Psalm 127:1).

CHAPTER VIII

FLEW FLUTTERED AND FLED

The debate conducted at North Texas University at Denton, between Dr. Thomas Warren (Christian), and Dr. Antony Flew (atheist), of England, turned out to be **anything but** the debate of the century as it was talked up to be. As any of us who attended could well relate, the debate was altogether one-sided. Flew was no match for Warren; had little to offer; nothing to present, and meandered in tiring circles, failing either to press an attack or answer the questions put to him. And, really, it was no shocking surprise. The battle between faith and nonfaith is nothing new. God's Word remains unscarred.

A HISTORY OF UNBELIEF

Robert G. Ingersoll denied the existence of God, defamed and belittled the Scriptures, and yet would meet nobody in debate although he was challenged by both Christian and Jew over the land. He wanted to "unload" his atheism, then like a fairy – fly away. When Woolsey Teller met Dr. James D. Bales of Harding University, the debate was much one-sided also. He had met his match in Bales, proving little to nothing, and eventually wore himself out beneath a relentless attack upon his unbelief and his

atheistic “evangelism.” The theme of the debate was “The Existence of God.” But such reports are nothing new. Insofar as this writer knows, there has never been a discussion between atheist and Christian but what the Christian defeated his opponent, if he was versed in the Scriptures and other supportive evidence.

And we could spend pages on the lack of validity of unbelief. Atheism, when driven to the corner, is cynical, sour and empty. One wonders why an atheist chooses to be an atheist in the first place. Some for personal attention; some due to lack of homework, letting the Evidences of Christianity fall on all sides without an investigation; some in earnest, such as Professor Romane who outright lost his faith in God and the Scriptures, but returned to them confessing the agony of unbelief.

SOMETHING TO PONDER

When one fails to see God in the Bible, in the moral code of the universe, in the lives of sincere and dedicated Christians, and in the overwhelming evidences of design, creative cause, with a desire **not to believe**, then it is that we wonder about the apparent blindness of the unbeliever. None put it better than did the Holy Spirit through Paul, “And even as they **refused** to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind” (Romans 1:28, 29). “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness; because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto

them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being evidenced through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse" (verses 18-20).

What happens to a person who looking at the creative hand of God deliberately turns away from the evidence? Is it because he has no evidence for faith? Is it because God has not left His fingerprints on His Creation? Hardly! Rather, when one turns directly away from the evidences for God, including especially the faith producing chapters of the divine Word, there comes a time or a place in the unbeliever's heart which because of his deliberate choice not to believe, seemingly is not able to believe! This scribe would assert that God sends him derision. As Paul put it, "And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2:11, 12). Like Pharoah, the skeptic continued in a hardness of heart. Some debaters have been so untruthful, so cunning, and unfair with the Scriptures that after so long it seems they have come to believe the error and cannot see beyond it. Perhaps this seems mere conjecture, but it presents itself for consideration.

Pitting revealed Christianity against the guns of modernism and unbelief, Carl F. H. Henry has written, "To develop the doctrine of God in Biblical terms is therefore to speak inevitably of Jesus Christ, and to speak of Him not simply by way of preface but by way of climax. It is the false gods who never 'show,' whose material

existence is simply the temporary reality of plastic idols, and whose life ultimately is a matter of but literary fiction or pious imagination. The God of the Bible – of creation, redemption and judgment – is the true God who towers above all others but who shows His face and bares His heart in Jesus Christ. In disclosing Himself He discloses our miserable plight. Revealing our human comedy is part of an eternal drama. He plays havoc with our pageantry, and makes a spectacle of our spectaculars” (“The God Who Shows Himself,” *The God Who Shows Himself*, Waco, Texas: Word Books, Inc., 1968, p. 5).

THE APPEAL OF LOGIC

In his book, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, Bernard Ramm has said, “The only reservation is that there is no monopoly on logic, and granted the facts, conclusions may be wrongly drawn by an expert, and may be rightly made by the informed amateur” (“Preface,” Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956). Christianity has an appeal to be heard, tried, tested and the evidences weighed carefully. To the skeptical mind of the Jew, Jesus said, “Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me” (John 5:39). Again Jesus said, “My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself” (John 7: 16, 17).

When one looks all about him at a fantasia of glory

in the works of God's creative hands, the canopy of stars and space overhead, the wonderment of His whole glorious Creation here on and throughout the earth, everything points to God, the everlasting God, Creator of heaven and earth. Searching out his soul, man testifies to a God-size zero which can be filled only by God himself. By the mass multitudes mankind has attested to this divine truth through the timeless ages. **There is absolutely no substitute for God!**

David by the Spirit declared, "O Jehovah, our Lord, How excellent is thy name in all the earth, Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens! . . . When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8:1, 3-4).

Unbelief, we say repeatedly and not without cause, resides far more abundantly in the heart than in the head and one has to trample over the galaxies of evidence in order to remain in his determined unbelief. Everything about him is shouting "God" in one way or another. But he turns off his hearing and closes his eyes. Jehovah pity the atheist, for he has turned on his own nature to deny that he was created and is rather the product of an accident, living apart in the lonely recesses of a mind turned bitter, a will gone sour. As an article in *Reader's Digest* some years back following an extensive interview with an unbeliever, captioned the review, "Thank God I'm an Atheist!"

CHAPTER IX

WHY WE STILL BELIEVE THE BIBLE (1)

Thomas Paine, once a Quaker preacher and firm believer in God and the Bible while in America, journeyed to France in 1787 and became an infidel. His book, *The Age of Reason*, he said would destroy the Bible and Christianity, but Paine died in 1809 and God's Word went on triumphantly. The Scriptures of God felt no pain from Paine.

In the United States, Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll in 1885 prophesied that within a quarter of a century there would be no more churches built. It is said that his career in the army would shame a coward; his morals could be compared with those of the French skeptics whom he imitated. His speeches and declarations were taken from their volumes. Ingersoll was challenged to debate all over the country both by reputable Christians and Jews, but he always refused a face to face confrontation.

Skeptic Voltaire boasted, "Within fifty years the Bible will no longer be discussed among educated people!" This denunciation was made during the scientific awakening some two hundred years ago, but the Bible is still the world's best seller and has been translated into a myriad of languages. And there continues to be sound and persuasive reasons for still believing the timeless, matchless

Word of the living God. Why do we believe?

BECAUSE WE STILL WANT TO BELIEVE

We want to believe in its promises. Herbert Lockyer has written eleven books in the "All" series, i. e., *All the Miracles of the Bible*, *All the Prayers of the Bible*, etc., with one in particular, *All the Promises of the Bible*. And we are made to be reminded that God always keeps His promises (Jeremiah 1:12; Titus 1:2).

There is the divine promise of a loving heavenly Father who cares for us. I want to believe this. Peter writes, "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication" (I Peter 3:12). And because of this he exhorts, "... casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7). James declares, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8). And from the Old Testament the comforting words of David, "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7). And continues, "Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good: blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him" (vs. 8).

There is the promise of a fuller, far happier and meaningful life through the providence of the Lord. Well did David say, "For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield: Jehovah will give grace and glory; No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11). Solomon wrote, "Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

And that immortal promise in the writings of the apostle Paul, "And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). Jesus has come that we might have life and in abundance! (John 10:10). There is no drippy faucet religion in Jesus Christ. And far too many professed Christians are waiting to meet the Lord in the graveyard! Jesus promised life that was vibrant, abundant and significantly fused with heavenly power. He declared, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39). God's people are to be **filled** with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). He, not they themselves, is **the source** of their life and radiant joy! He makes Christianity real! But what a sordid lot are they who have never received Him. The beauty of the New Birth is **feeling new**! Old things are passed away, and **ALL** things are become new (II Corinthians 5:17).

We want to believe the Bible because there is the promise of an inward tranquility which none but God's children may have or know. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). It was said by secular historians, "These Christians seem to have a peace about them which none can know but they themselves." And by the thousands, they went to martyrdom praying, singing, and

totally composed and confident. They thrilled at the thought of death. They were conquerors along with Christ (Romans 8:31-39).

Paul injected, "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7).

We want to believe the Bible because there is sobering realization that there is always something beyond ourselves. Catherine Marshall's book, *Beyond Ourselves*, well portrays this awareness. As David attested, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains: From whence shall my help come? My help cometh from Jehovah, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2).

We want to believe in God's promise of life to come. The late James A. Pike, bishop over the state of California, wrote the controversial, *The Other Side*, following the death of his son. He came to believe in life after death although earlier he had remained skeptical of it. His study of origins of Christianity turned out to be a most illuminating pursuit. But God's Word has taught life after death all the way throughout its pages, from cover to cover. And God has promised His own eternal life (Titus 1:2; Psalm 23:6; John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:1-5; 22:1-4; II Timothy 4:6-8; I Thessalonians 4:13, 14; *et al.*). How wonderful it is to think of that which for God's children is yet to come!

The dark blanket of atheism cannot cover the glow.

ITS POWER TO DIRECT

Long ago David wrote, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). Jeremiah said, "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). And Solomon, the world's richest king, its wisest man born of woman, observed among his many reflections, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). By the uncounted multitudes men and women have groped in darkness knowing not which way, nor to whom, to turn. But when at last they encountered the Word of God, they soon came to know that it was not intended that man be all sufficient. His entirety is to fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Nameless, numberless, testimonies can come from lives who have committed their life to the statutes of God's Word, and declare victory! God's Word gives to today's man comfort when he is in sorrow, direction when no way seems clear, and promise of constant hovering providence – finally, a home in Heaven to the faithful, joy and glory throughout an unending Eternity!

CHAPTER X

WHY WE STILL BELIEVE THE BIBLE (2)

Having spoken of many of the reasons for our continuing to believe the Bible and its Author, we add yet additional reasons for our faith and confidence in the blessed Book of God.

COMMENTS OF INFLUENTIAL MEN

We still wish to believe the Bible because of what very famous and influential men have said about it. It was John Quincy Adams who propounded, "The first and almost the only book deserving of universal distinction is the Bible. I speak as a man of the world to men of the world and I say to you, 'Search the Scriptures'."

Daniel Webster who read the Bible through annually said, "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering, but if we in our prosperity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury us and our glory in profound obscurity."

Andrew Jackson said, "That book is the rock on which this republic stands." The beloved Abraham Lincoln declared, "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this book upon reason that you can and the

balance by faith and you will live and die a better man.”

Theodore Roosevelt, “Almost every man who has by his life’s work added to the sum of human achievements of which the race is proud, almost every such man has based his life’s work upon the teachings of the Bible.” Woodrow Wilson said, “A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of a knowledge of the Bible.” Napoleon Bonaparte, “Behold it upon the table. I never fail to read it, and every day with the same pleasure Not only is one’s mind absorbed, it is controlled and the same can never go astray with this book for its guide.”

Lord Roberts testified, “You will find in this book guidance when you are in health, comfort when you are in sickness and strength when you are in adversity.” Isaac Walton, the English author, said, “Every hour I read you, it kills a sin or lets a virtue in to fight it.” Jean Jacques Rousseau, the famed French writer and skeptic, stated, “I must confess to you that the majesty of the scriptures astonishes me If it had been the invention of men, the invention would have been greater than the greatest heroes.” Charles A. Dana, American journalist, “Of all the books, the most indispensable and the most useful, the one whose knowledge is the most effective is the Bible. There is no book like the Bible. In every controversy the Bible contains the right answer and pleads the right policy.”

Isaac Newton said, “I account the scriptures of God the most sublime philosophy.” And that not-to-be-out-spoken and filled with fire Patrick Henry who shouted, “Give me liberty or give me death!”, said concerning the

Bible, "There is a Book worth all other books in the world." And we could continue page after page quoting from men such as these, for hardly any man or woman of notable achievement and possessing a dedicated and brilliant mind has done other than convey to the world that needful and unwavering faith in God's Word, called the Bible. **Few indeed are the skeptics who propounded their pessimism and unbelief after having spent appreciable time with it. The Bible produces faith, not infidelity! (Romans 10:17). It is God's contact with man to make him aware of himself and of his Maker. And we can scarcely go beyond this.**

THE DESPAIR OF UNBELIEF

We have afore noticed what Professor Romane said with regard to the unbelief of the unbeliever, that man's nature without God is "thoroughly miserable." But there is a long list of others. For instance, the skeptic Voltaire attested, "Strike out a few sages, and the crowd of human beings is nothing but a horrible assemblage of unfortunate criminals, and the globe contains nothing but corpses. I tremble to have to complain once more of the Being of Beings, in casting an attentive eye over this horrible picture. I wish I had never been born The box of Pandora is the most beautiful fable of antiquity. Hope was at the bottom" (John Cairns, *Unbelief in the 18th Century*, 1881, p. 141. *Voltaire's Dialogue*, II: 194).

The pessimistic words of Hume, "Where am I or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? . . . I am confounded with all

these quotations, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of every member and faculty" (*Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, pp. 4, 7, Green and Grese edition, I:548).

Strauss, atheist and ardent opponent to the cross of Christ, said, "In the enormous machine of the universe, amid wheel and hiss of its jagged wheels, amid the deafening crash of its stamps and hammers, in the midst of this whole terrific commotion, man finds himself placed with no security for a moment, that a wheel might not seize and render him, or a hammer crash him to pieces" (As quoted from John Cairns, *op. cit.*, p. 253).

Anatole France, in sour pessimism deplored, " 'In all the world the unhappiest creature is man . . . !' " He takes my hands in his (in the words of his secretary, Jean Brousson), and his are trembling and feverish. He looks me in the eyes. His are full of tears. His face is haggard. He sighs: 'There is none in all the world more unhappy than I. People think me happy. I have never been happy for one day, not for a single hour!' " (J. J. Brousson, *Anatole France Himself*, Philadelphia, 1925, pp. 70, 71).

And yet God-defying Communism declares that faith in God and religion itself is a sign of weakness and even mental illness, forcing many believers in God into mental hospitals for severe treatment. What has Communism and the *Manifesto* to say about miserably undone skeptics and unbelievers in God? It is not the believer, the Christian, who is sick and his mind famished to the point of emotional frustration. When we take a close look

at things, the order does not defy a reversal! When we learn more and more about the lives of satanic "God-Killers," either Communist or mere atheist, we find that nothing but either an initial or a reclaimed life to God and Christ answer the innermost struggle for identity and rational and rewarding living to the full!

IN ANALYSIS

And in these, the foregoing, we have a fair sampling of the uncounted multitudes who have tried to live in God's world without acknowledging Him as Creator and rightful Master of the affairs and destinies of men. Every word together with every secret thing will be brought before the judgment at the throne of God, the Maker of heaven and earth; things seen and which cannot be seen – Almighty God is the Hub of all that is and without Him things would fly helplessly out of place and into a meaningless, orbitless wilderness of horrible description. God is alive and real, and without Him there would be nothing, for He made it all. One would with profit read Ecclesiastes 12: 1-14. The whole duty, or the whole of man is to fear God and keep His commandments. Of this kind of living David wrote, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is the law of the Lord; and in his law doeth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The

ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Psalm 1:1-6; KJV)

CHAPTER XI

WHY WE STILL BELIEVE THE BIBLE (3)

We have denoted numerous reasons for our believing the Bible today, and there are mountains more.

ITS INDESTRUCTIBLE NATURE

Where Bibles were once burned thousands at a time, later the Geneva Bible Society printed, stored and distributed the Bible by the hundreds of thousands! There is no destroying God's immortal and holy Word. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). During the maniac French Revolution, the Bible was tied to the tail of a donkey and shamefully dragged down the street for all to see. But that Bible sprang back in utter defiance! If the Bible were not God's Word, it would have been destroyed long ago, for Satan has been doing all in his power to take it off the face of the earth, yet **cannot**. If this farm boy might use a crude illustration, about the hardest growth to kill out is Johnson grass, for the more you chop at it the more it comes back! The Bible is like this, but far more so.

Through Isaiah God declared, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the

earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:8-11).

"Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

" 'How many anvils have you had,' said I,
'To wear and batter all these hammers so?'
'Just one,' said he; then said with twinkling eye,
'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.'

"And so, I thought, the anvil of God's word
For ages skeptics' blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed – the hammers gone!"

ITS PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT

Long ago God declared through Isaiah, "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them" (Isaiah 42:9). Man is limited to know only the past and the immediate

moment, but the Word of God clearly reveals the future, a future no man can possibly know. By the Spirit Peter wrote, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:16-21; KJV).

Over a period of sixteen hundred years, forty writers of varied nationalities and physical description have compiled a volume of sixty-six books containing no errors, no contradictions. In the very fall of man, God foretold in the crucifixion of His own beloved Son centuries yet to come and to crush the head of the serpent in the infliction upon His heel (Genesis 3:15; I John 3:8; Ephesians 4:8).

The birthplace of Jesus was foretold in Micah 5:2, and seen brought to pass in Matthew 1:17-25. His death on the cross was prophetically forecast in Psalm 22:1-22, and brought to pass to the most exacting detail as seen in Matthew, Mark, Luke and in John. Jesus was to be born

of a virgin and the virgin birth itself was the sign given (Isaiah 7:14), detailed in Matthew 1:18, 23. The descriptive details of our Lord's death are given us in Isaiah 53: 1-12. His ascending back to Heaven to receive the kingdom is foretold in Daniel 7:13, 14, some seven hundred years in advance of the fulfillment (Acts 1:1ff). And we need but to continue through the pages of God's Book to see vividly that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed while the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. One must "handle aright" the Word of God fully to apprehend and appreciate it (II Timothy 2:15).

Jesus merely sent the Scribes and the Pharisees back to their own scriptures, for these writers were they who testified of Him (John 5:39). He explained all things concerning himself as pertained to the Old Testament's being fulfilled in His earthly ministry, crucifixion, burial and resurrection (Luke 24:44-48). And the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit was foretold in Joel 2:28-30, but fulfilled in Acts Chapter 2; and Peter by the same Spirit declared unto all the people the meaning of the outpouring and showed how it directly related to the moment (Acts 2:16-33).

Everything pertaining to the kingdom of God was taught both by Christ and later by His apostles, anticipating its coming in power (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:6-8; 2:1-4). Jesus had fulfilled all the will of the Father concerning His work on earth, and following His death, resurrection, and appearances, ascended back to the Father to receive the kingdom and its rule (Daniel 7:13, 14). He shall rule until the restitution or restoration of all things which God had

forespoken by the mouth of all His prophets since the beginning of the world (Acts 3:21).

THE LOGICAL APPEAL

Jesus continually stated that His work being done on earth was not His doing, but that of the Father. And then He declared, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:16, 17; KJV). Jesus is further pictured standing at the door of the heart, seeking entrance with persistent knocking (Revelation 3:20); eagerly inviting that those buried in spiritual anguish look up and come into His loving and securing arms (Matthew 11:28-31). He said as given in John's gospel, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32).

There is nothing more substantial concerning the kingdom of God or of Christ, than that men obey the divine will supremely in their lives, walk in heavenly ways and then be their own judge as to whether Jesus' teaching was His own, or that of the Father. As we have before heard, **Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; but has gone wanting for men to try it!** The apostle took a sample of it and made three missionary journeys, wrote fourteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, and preached the gospel to the world. See if he has any regrets in the last chapter of the last epistle he penned (II Timothy 4:6-8).

There is nothing more substantial concerning the kingdom of Christ than that men obey His will supremely in their lives, walk deliberately in His ways, and then be the judge as to whether Jesus spoke on His own or from the Father, the Almighty himself! The final words of the Revelation continue to plead with men, the creation of the hands of God: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

The disciple "whom Jesus loved," John, wrote with an appeal for the early disciples or those outside of Christ to come and partake of the divine, convincingly warm, fellowship: "That which was from the beginning, that we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life: For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. **And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full**" (I John 1:1-4).

The first time John writes, he writes to create faith in Jesus as God's Son (John 20:30, 31); the second time he writes, he writes to **share and extend what he has learned about the Son**. The writers of the Scriptures, the Bible, have absolutely nothing to gain by what they write; in fact, perhaps even much to lose – but they dipped their pens into deep wells of conviction, experience, and first-hand awareness – asking but little: merely **examine the evidence**

before reaching conclusions.

When the two disciples of John the immerser followed Jesus, they queried, "Where dwellest thou?" (John 1:38), and Jesus replied with two verbs and a significant conjunction: **"Come and see"** (verse 38b). And just so is it that life must be lived first before one can truly know the teachings of Jesus. Authors have written of them; others quote His sayings; but it is he alone whom the Father loves who, taking Jesus at His word, also seeks out the way that Jesus himself lived, walked, and talked (I Peter 2:21). This man, as says James, "shall be blessed in his deed" (1:25).

That the Bible is a volume of instructions on **how to live** and **how not to live** is an understatement echoed in the archives of Glory – but wilfully to obey is the secret to rapture and joy! **God's commandments were not written nearly so much to be read from pulpits as they are to be obeyed in lives.**

When the Master of men beckoned Simon Peter to follow Him following His resurrection, Peter lingered as to what John would do, to which Jesus replied, "If I will that he tarry til I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me!" (John 21:19-22). And that same majestic beckon falls on our hearts today.

CHAPTER XII

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST (1)

The historian Matthew leaves us this record, "He is not here; for he is risen, as he said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:6). When we consider the evidences supporting the resurrection of Jesus, supporting this declaration, it seems most remarkable that men would beg the issue. But they have and do to this day.

CHRISTIANITY FOUNDED ON A RISEN LORD

No other singular event can so account for the rapid and uncanny growth of the church, and against such satanic odds. R. H. Glover, in *The Progress of World-Wide Missions*, estimates that by the end of the apostolic period there were half a million Christians! And there is reason to believe that this was a most modest estimate, considering the thousands martyred afore. Paul spoke of the rapid growth of the church in his day (Romans 10:18; Colossians 1:23). The whole world had heard the gospel! And that within thirty years after the giving of Jesus' Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).

"The New Testament proves not only that the Christians from the very outstart were fully persuaded, on what they regarded as adequate grounds in history and

experience, that their Lord had risen from the dead, but also that this conviction mastered them, giving direction and purpose to their whole lives. Historical Christianity was erected on the foundation of a Risen Lord" (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 623).

On Pentecost, a risen Lord was preached (Acts 2: 23, 24), and people entered into the kingdom of God by believing, repenting of their sins and being immersed in New Testament baptism (Acts 2:38, 41, 47; Romans 6: 3, 4; Colossians 2:12), after the similitude of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. These early disciples died believing He had risen. They suffered pain defying words because they were convinced of His resurrection. One would with profit read *Fox's Book of Martyrs*.

THE FACT OF THE CHURCH TODAY

If the church of Christ did not begin as the New Testament so asserts, and that being with a miraculous commencement when Christ was proclaimed risen Lord (Acts 2), then **when, where, and how** did it begin? The church is here today. Serious New Testament Christians are still believing and teaching what was believed and taught two thousand years ago. How do we account for this glaring phenomenon? Why and how has the New Testament itself, the divine record of the church's beginning, been kept intact? The enemies of Christianity have done all in their power to destroy both the church and the Bible. But the greater the persecution, the greater the growth! The kingdom shall never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44).

THE FACT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ITSELF

It lays bold claim to historic identity. "The real historical evidence for the resurrection is the fact that it was believed, preached, propagated, and produced its fruit and effect in the new phenomenon of the Christian church, long before any of our gospels were written . . . Faith in the resurrection was not only prevalent but immensely powerful before any of our New Testament books were written. Not one of them would ever have been written, but for that faith. It is not this or that in the New Testament – it is not the story of the empty tomb, or of the appearing of Jesus in Jerusalem or in Galilee – which is the primary evidence for the resurrection, it is the New Testament itself. The life that throbs in it from the beginning to end, the life that always fills us again with wonder, as it beats upon us from its pages, is the life which the Risen Saviour has quickened in Christian souls. The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus is the existence of the church in that extraordinary spiritual vitality which confronts us in the New Testament. This is its only explanation for being" (Professor Denney, *Jesus and the Gospels*, p. 111).

THE SILENCE AS TO THE WHEREABOUTS
OF THE BODY

"How, too, is it possible to account for the failure of the Jews to disprove the resurrection? Not more than seven weeks afterward Peter preached in that city the fact that

Jesus had been raised. What would have been easier or more conclusive than for the Jews to have produced the dead body and silenced Peter forever? The silence of the Jews is as significant as the speech of the Christians" (Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, p. 357).

"The body of Jesus had vanished so completely that all the authority they had at their command could not produce it; the apostles' claim that Jesus was alive again received public affirmation by the miracles of healing performed in his name. It was, for the Sanhedrin, a disturbing situation" (F. F. Bruce, "A Miracle and Its Consequences," *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, p. 103).

THE TESTIMONY OF THE EMPTY TOMB

The tomb was empty. The grave garments were folded neatly to themselves, so characteristic of the careful manner of Jesus who did nothing without proper consideration (See John 6:12). Haste on the part of the disciples endeavoring to steal the body, as went the story, under the nose of the soldiers would have left evidences. Peter rushed into the tomb and John stayed at the entrance looking in. He observed the evidences of a risen Lord (John 20:7).

THE UNEXPECTED JESUS

The disciples did not expect to see Jesus again. We find them (1) Unable to believe in His death and resurrection (Mark 8:31-33); (2) Gathered in hiding for fear of the

Jews (John 20:19); (3) Unwilling at last to believe they would see Him again following His death, but sad and pessimistic (Luke 24:16-24); (4) And even having received the report from the women, their words seemed to them like "idle tales" (Luke 24:11). (5) While at the mountain gathering, "some doubted" (Matthew 28:17). (6) And He upbraided them because of their unbelief and hardness of heart, "because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen" (Mark 16:14). See also Mark 16:10, 11 and Luke 24:24. That they did not expect to see Him would explode the vision theory; that they merely imagined they saw Him.

THE WITNESSES

(1) They were in a position to know the facts which pertained to Jesus as were none other (Acts 1:21, 22; 5:32; 10:41). (2) They were honest enough to tell the truth about what they saw, for they went to martyrdom rather than deny their testimony. Peter made it clear at the household of Cornelius that Jesus did not appear unto "all the people" but unto witnesses chosen before, even those who did eat with Him after His resurrection (Acts 10:40ff).

THE NATURE OF THE APPEARANCES

Jesus appeared to above five hundred witnesses over a period of forty days, on some ten different occasions (Acts 1:1ff and I Corinthians 15:1-9). See Wilbur M. Smith,

Therefore Stand, p. 387; Stanley E. Sayers, *For This Cause*, p. 144. We shall proceed into this more in detail in chapters following.

CHAPTER XIII

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST (2)

As we continue with our topic, we remain all the more grateful to those sterling witnesses who were willing to lay down their lives for what they believed. As the apostle Paul put it in speaking of his concern for the Lord Jesus and His work, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39). And he said in the First Corinthian letter, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (chapter 15, verse 19).

UNCHANGED TESTIMONY

Under unmerciful torture, some of the early day saints recanted to escape with their lives. But where on record did any **original witness** of the resurrection change his mind about what he had seen? The witnesses were convinced! They knew in their hearts it was true! Nothing could have done more to discourage or render invalid their faith in the bodily resurrection of Jesus than for the Sanhedrin to have produced the dead body on Pentecost,

and there would be nothing more they would have cherished to do! But on Pentecost, it was a risen, reigning Lord whom the apostles preached. See Acts 2:22-36.

NO CONTRADICTION EVIDENCE

Nobody said, "I was there, too, and know the story is not true." Nobody said, "I saw all they saw, and know the story is only a hoax." But nobody said this. To the contrary, we continue to see and hear a vivid, unwavering testimony at the hands of the apostles and no doubt from the five hundred who at one time saw Him (I Corinthians 15:6). Though we have not touched on it, no doubt Jesus not only selected witnesses who because of their nearness to Him could fully identify Him after His resurrection, but men also who under torture would not deny their testimony. Men who by first-hand knowledge empowered by the Spirit whom the world could not dissuade.

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

Men saw Jesus in the flesh, in person; they touched His body, ate with Him (John 21:9-14). Upon first-hand examination and in the most empirical manner, Thomas conceded, he confessed, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). We have scientific proof of Jesus' resurrection. The Master of men invited physical investigation (Luke 24:36-39).

THE CONFIDENT MANNER

Standing on the seashore of Galilee, Jesus called out to His disciples, not "Behold, it is I," nor yet, "Hallelujah, I am risen!" – but, "Children, have ye any meat?" And they answered, "No." The human mind is not ready for this. Emotionalists trying to make a dead Savior alive would never have chosen these words.

Then they came to shore and they ate together. Jesus was risen indeed! The disciples could not have talked such a story into existence, could not have attached so significantly to time and history as myth or fable that has so dynamically affected the entire world. We are left with the story as a solid portion of undeniable history. But human nature being what it is, through time men have objected, some forcefully, to the evidences, as to every positive position there is a negative position whether right or wrong, and men have called into utmost question the validity of the resurrection of Jesus called Christ.

THE FORCES OF UNBELIEF

On the morning of news of the empty tomb spread abroad, the soldiers in fright who were guarding the tomb rushed to the Sanhedrin who quickly offered them bribe money to say, "His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept" (Matthew 18:13). "So they took the money, and did as they were taught; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matthew 28:15) – that:

1. **The disciples stole the body.** This presumption is immediately refuted, however, in the same passage in which it originally occurs. 1) If the disciples stole the body at night while the soldiers slept, they could not have known **who** took the body. 2) In the second place, it is entirely evident that it should have required bribe money to relate such a story for it meant the life of a Roman soldier to fall asleep while on post; thus they were afraid the story would reach the ears of the governor (Matthew 18:14). 3) For that matter, the disciples had no need for the body when it had been honorably buried. They saw to that (Luke 24:55). 4) It is unreasonable that something could so **suddenly** have inspired them to go out and face the enemies of Jesus and the soldiers themselves. We find them huddled together in an upper room, the doors locked, for fear of the Jews (John 20:19).

2. **Joseph of Arimathaea removed the body.** When Joseph buried the body of Jesus, then Isaiah 53:9 was fulfilled, "And he made his grave with . . . the rich at his death." 1) There was no reason for Joseph to venture out under the heated animosity of the Jews to try and remove the body. 2) We see no reason for Joseph to have removed the body, and if he did remove it, there has never been any evidence either of this or any place to whence he may have removed it. 3) The Roman soldiers were commanded to let nobody near the body or the tomb, and this included Joseph who gave his own new tomb to the crucified Savior of all humankind. 4) Had Joseph actually removed the body, the description of Mark and Luke that he was a good and just man, "an honorable counselor," would have called

upon him to testify to this fact when Christians began to die for their faith in His supernatural and bodily resurrection.

3. **The women found the wrong tomb.** This theory, remarkably enough, is held by two prominent New Testament scholars of our day or near recent day: Professor Kirsoppe Lake and Dr. Gardiner Smith (Lake, *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*; P. Gardiner Smith, *The Narratives of the Resurrection*). "They believe that the reason the women missed the tomb was that they were convulsed with sorrow, their eyes being blinded with tears, and hardly knowing where they were going" (Wilbur M. Smith, "The Resurrection of Christ," *Therefore Stand*, p. 381).

1) But it is not likely that the women devoted as these could so have forgotten where they had buried their beloved Master. People today do not so soon carelessly forget such things as this; no, not in a seventy-two hour period. 2) They saw the angels; the angels said He was risen, and told them to go quickly and relate the news to His disciples. When the disciples came, they too found the empty tomb (John 10:1-10). 3) There were three women: Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Joanna (Matthew 28:1; Luke 24:10). It is not feasible that all three should agree in unison on this most remarkable error! 4) And then, Jesus was not buried in a public cemetery, but in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein never man yet laid" (John 19:41). This very greatly reduces the possibility of

such a tremendous blunder. 5) And yet is there the fact that there were multitudes of witnesses with whom to reckon.

The resurrection of Christ did not transpire in a smoldering cave off in some wilderness – but right under the most scrutinizing eyes!

CHAPTER XIV

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST (3)

In a foregoing article we have stated that there were arguments contending with the Biblical record that Jesus had risen from the dead. The disciples having stolen the body, Joseph of Arimathaea having removed the body, and the women finding the wrong tomb. There is yet another with which we wish to deal: **The Swoon Theory.**

Skeptics have proposed Jesus did not die on the cross, but only fainted, thus "swooned," and once placed within the coolness of the tomb, having been passed for dead, revived consciousness, removed the stone from the entrance to the tomb, and then where He went nobody quite seems to know. This theory is extremely weak.

1) Jesus was proved dead once when the soldiers pierced His side. They broke the legs of the two thieves to hasten death, but Jesus was dead, so they pierced His side "and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:32-34). 2) This is the second evidence that Jesus was dead; He evidently died of a ruptured heart from the total agony of pain. The Scripture was fulfilled, "A bone of him shall not be broken," and again another Scripture saith, "They shall look on him whom they pierced" (John 19:36, 37; Psalm 34:20; 22:16; Zechariah 12:10). 3) Jesus was again proved dead when Joseph of Arimathaea inquired

concerning the body and Pilate sent a centurion to see if he were dead, "And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph" (Mark 15:44, 45). 4) And when they took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in a burial linen and "laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone to the door" (Mark 15:46) – they knew He was **dead**. If this were the end to the story of the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, it would be the **horror of the ages!** The Greatest King who ever lived, the Greatest Physician, the most compassionate person, the friend of all mankind – was brutally taken by His own people, pressed through an illegal trial, declared guilty when there was no guilt, and underwent the most torturous death known: this and all the humiliation while crowds looked on. History has no parallel! History has no near equal!

But, take heart, **no tomb could contain Him**. He was stronger than the bonds of death and defied Satan to the face! And Satan who had the power of death, trembled at the confrontation. But to return to our narrative:

WHAT BECAME OF THE BODY?

But should Jesus have actually revived consciousness within the tomb, not having died on the cross, there has never been any evidence of what became of the mangled corpse? The thing which would most effectively have silenced the rapid growth of the church and put to silence its piercing proclamation would have been the presentation of the dead, lifeless body of Jesus by the boiling

Sanhedrin! But they did not produce the body and they could not. Rather than there being scattered reports of having found the mutilated body of an unrisen Lord, reports began coming joltingly to the foreground of a resurrected Christ, and it put the entire populace of Judea into panic. Trying to put down the report was like denying He had lived.

David Strauss, bitter enemy of the gospels, said as much of the Swoon Theory, "Such a resuscitation could only have weakened the impression which he had made upon them in life and in death, – or at the most could have given it an elegiac voice, – but could by now possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm, or elevated their reverence into worship" (David Strauss, *The Life of Jesus for the People*, 1879, I., p. 412).

If Jesus did not die on the cross, then under what circumstances did He die and when and where? Refuting the New Testament record is no simple thing; men have been attempting it for centuries, nineteen hundred plus, to be exact, but still without even marginal success.

THE FINAL THEORY

There is in conclusion one final theory. **The Vision Theory.** One of the outstanding claims of critics is what they call superstition and imagination on the part of the professed witnesses. They but imagined they saw Jesus alive after His alleged resurrection. Professor Klausner writes, "There can be no question but that some of the ardent Galileans saw their Lord and Messiah in a vision"

(*Jesus of Nazareth, His Life, Times and Teachings*, p. 359).

1) It cannot logically be maintained that an entire populace of five hundred witnesses at one time in a vision saw the risen Lord (I Corinthians 15:6). 2) And that most certain fact that the disciples **did not expect** to see Him again discourages that frame of mind out of which visions and hallucinations so fruitfully arise. 3) And how can we account for the visions ceasing within the forty day period? (Acts 1:1-3). Were the people seeing visions, they would have continued to see them even following Jesus' ascension to the Father, or in the thinking of the skeptic, His **alleged** ascension. The circumstances surrounding the resurrection of Christ keep bringing it to the foreground. It was scientifically impossible, totally improbable, but the evidences are undeniable; they demand that we take:

A FINAL CONSIDERATION

It is within the mind of man where pessimism and unbelief dwells, and out of these minds where impressions negatively disposed to the proclamations of the Bible are forthcoming. When the facts of the case are considered, one finds himself without words to talk down the voices of the early centuries which loudly and unanimously declare that out of the hills of Judea there emerged of a sudden moment – a risen Lord! Life and all existence have been greatly enlarged and enhanced by the simple trust and acceptance of it as a concrete, undeniable fact of history. Trying to delete the divine effects from history is like trying to absorb the ocean with an eyedropper! It

cannot be done. And towering over all the intertwined is the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

To make one's life conform to it and live with the resurrection message dear to one's heart, in the peace of mind and confidence it still instills in the human being, undeniably remains the greatest evidence of all.

Jesus of Galilee who silenced the storm of the sea with a mere word, who twice multiplied loaves and fishes to feed thousands, who walked on the surface of the Tiberian waters, who cast out demons and healed every disease to which mankind by Satan was oppressed, who called back the dead as though they had never departed, is himself historically and miraculously risen from the realm of the dead. And there looms before our eyes an ever nearer approaching Eternity at which time we shall see Him face to face! (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; *et al.*).

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